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AUTHOR Slawski, Carl
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ABSTRACT

A theoretical model of the relationship between occupational training and style of social interaction, in terms of task vs. socio-emotional means and goals of education, was developed, operationalized, and applied to 148 faculty and graduate students in four departments of a large public university. The general suggestive hypothesis, examined through case studies, was that the disciplines with the reputedly more objective ideologies (tentatively represented in descending order by mechanical engineering, physiology, anthropology, and philosophy) will foster a graduate student-faculty relationship that is higher in task orientation, but lower in socio-emotional orientation. Two more specific subhypotheses were directly examined with pilot study questionnaire data: (1) If the members of a department consider either task or Lsocio-emotional means of education more essential, they will find that the actual means used in their department are either task or socio-emotionally oriented, respectively. (2) If the members of a department consider either task or socio-emotional goals of education more essential, they will find that the actual goals attained in their departments are either task or socio-emotionally oriented, respectively. Although further study with a larger sample is recommended, it is suggested that the future significance of this study could be its pointing the way to educational relevance over alienation and unrest on campus. (Author/LBH)

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MEANS AND GOALS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION:

COMPARATIVE CASES

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by

Dr. Carl Slawski

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MEANS AND GOALS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION

Abstract

A theoretical model of the relationship between occupational training and style of social interaction, in terms of task vs. socio-emotional means and goals of education was developed, operationalized, and applied to 148 faculty and graduate students in four departments of a large public university. The general suggestive hypothesis, examined through case studies, was that the disciplines with the reputedly more objective ideologies (tentatively represented in descending order by mechanical engineering, physiology, anthropology, and philosophy) will foster a graduate student-faculty relationship that is higher in task orientation, but lower in socio-emotional orientation. Two more specific subhypotheses were directly examined with pilot study questionnaire data: (1) If the members of a department consider either task or socio-emotional means of education more essential, then they will find that the actual means used in their department are either task or socio-emotionally oriented, respectively. (2) If the members of a department consider either task or socio-emotional goals of education more essential, then they will find that the actual goals attained in their department are either task or socio-emotionally oriented, respectively.

MEANS AND GOALS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION:
COMPARATIVE CASES

Stereotypes and distinctive labels are commonly used to categorize the values and behavior of members of certain occupational types. This is true even within professional and academic disciplines, suggesting that there are real differences not only between their ways of behavior but also between the ideologies (or values and belief systems) of such professionals. The overarching problem then is to elaborate with appropriate illustrations the relationship between the perceived typical values of an academic specialty and the associated style of social behavior.

Within the context of the university, any study of social organization and interaction should take account of the context or basic unit of specialization known as the department. In fact, specialization is so prevalent that it can well be said that within broad limits, the very process of education in a university is carried on at the level of the department. It would seem then of the highest moment to make an objective study of various university departments as an initial step towards understanding the essential processes operating in American higher education today. This understanding would be a practical benefit, in addition to knowledge gained about professional socialization and career ideologies.

Illumination of the relevant issues should be definitely advanced by this present attempt to elaborate and empirically delineate a select number of means and goals of graduate education against the background knowledge of organizational and interactional features spelled out in terms

of the overall working hypothesis: The disciplines with the reputedly more objective ideologies (tentatively represented in descending order by mechanical engineering, physiology, anthropology, and philosophy) will foster a graduate student-faculty relationship that is high in task orientation, but lower in socio-emotional orientation.

The Literature

For whatever reason, despite the perennial wide interest in higher education, there has been little systematic study of the process of university education per se, especially not in terms of the teacher-student relationship, and least of all in graduate departments (except by Becker and Carper: 1956; and tangentially by Friedenberg and Roth: 1954). In particular, little attention has been given directly and specifically to the relations between and among university faculty and graduate students, let alone in the pregnant terms of educational values (a need for which was indicated by Brim: 1958).

The single directly relevant comparative study of university departments was done by Becker and Carper, and published in differing aspects as "The Elements of Identification with an Occupation," and "The Development of Identification with an Occupation" (1956b and 1956a). While these latter two papers were used as the starting point for development of the present study of departmental interaction style, even these articles do not go into depth on the values or ideology of the departments, as was the primary intent of the present suggestive research.

Units of Study

The specific means and goals items of the questionnaire have been derived in the light of concepts in the literature on educational theory (e.g., Brauner: 1964), philosophy of education (e.g., Brubacher: 1962 and 1964), social psychology and sociology (e.g., Vreeland and Bidwell: 1966; Z. Gamson: 1966; and Brim: 1958). To this end, they have been stated in terms of social and cultural values in the educational context.

Before enumerating these values, the assumption will be made that they will overlap to a great extent or be held in common across various departments, giving the basis for a more universally applicable set of categories, useful for the study of any bureaucratic organization with an educational objective. In addition, the literature on small groups (Bales: 1949; Fiedler: 1966; Verba: 1966) as well as the sociology of education (Brim: 1958) suggests a classification of educational means and goals as either task or socio-emotional values. The twelve values are listed in chart I in the form of a guide for interpreting the findings in terms of predicted ratings for the four major classes of variables.

In particular, since the nature of the university is essentially task oriented, the chart predicts that task oriented means and task oriented goals for all four departments will be highly valued. However, for socio-emotional means and socio-emotional goals, it is suggested that the valuation given will vary across the more scientific (natural science and engineering) vs. humanistic disciplines (humanities and social science). Specifically, the chart predicts that the "softer" disciplines of philosophy and anthropology will give a "high" value

Chart I

VALUES IN THE FACULTY-GRADUATE STUDENT RELATIONSHIP*

Discipline	TASK		SOCIO-EMOTIONAL	
	Means	Goals	Means	Goals
	Critiques	Creativity	Rapport	Social Values
	Accessibility	Subject Mastery	Subjectivity	Non-Rational Sensitivity
	Coordination	Career Advancement	Democratic	Appreciation for Ideas
Humanities: (Philosophy)	High	High	High	High
Social Science: (Anthropology)	High	High	High	High
Natural Science: (Physiology)	High	High	Low	Low
Engineering: (Mechanical)	High	High	Low	Low

*The ratings (High or Low) in this table are simply speculative predictions, based on the stereotypical images held of the corresponding disciplines. The purpose of the table is to serve as a guide for interpreting results of the research. Actual data appear in table 1.

rating to socio-emotional means and goals of education. Such a method of comparison allows this research to go beyond simple description and speculation to a more objective comparison of differences between the "several cultures" of the university.

The particular values chosen were distilled by a kind of mental factor analysis from a large number of more phenomenological or microscopic and operational items (from a study by Epperson: 1966). The choice of the particular twelve values for inclusion in this listing is based on the desire for a reasonably complete yet parsimonious set of variables which would be generally considered adequate for various fields, including such diverse areas as literature, art, science, business, and physical education. The values also fall into categories corresponding to some of those developed by Parsons and Shils (1951) and Bales (1949) which suggests that the categories chosen are in some degree comprehensive. In particular, the task oriented means, given as accessibility, giving of critiques, and coordination, correspond respectively to Bales' categories of orientation, evaluation and control in the small group process. The socio-emotional means given here as creates rapport, subjectivity, and democratic, correspond to Bales' integration, tension-management, and decision functions. The two sets of goals, stated here as first, task-oriented, namely, subject mastery, creativity, and career advancement, and second, socio-emotional, namely, personal and social values, non-rational sensitivity, and appreciation for ideas, both correspond respectively to Parsons' delineation of value-orientations as cognitive, moral and appreciative.

Design

The questionnaire on the means and goals of graduate education was mailed to all faculty and graduate students (n=345) in three departments (which resulted in returns from 49 in anthropology, 35 in physiology, 31 in philosophy) and for practical reasons to students only (with 33 responding) in a fourth department (mechanical engineering) of a large public university in midwestern United States. Respondents (total n = 148) were asked to rank the essentiality of these means and goals, and to estimate the actual situation by rating each of the means and goals separately.

The questionnaire deals, as we have seen, with twelve educational values derived both on the basis of practical, day-to-day issues and problems of education as well as from more general categories of the philosophy and sociology of higher education (cf. Chart I). The twelve means and goals are divided into four categories: 1. task oriented means (A. critiques given by faculty to graduate students; B. accessibility of faculty and graduate students to one another; C. coordination of joint activities); 2. task-oriented goals (A. creativity; B. mastery of the subject matter; C. career advancement); 3. socio-emotionally oriented means (A. rapport between faculty and graduate students; B. subjective responses allowed to graduate students; C. democratic relations between faculty and graduate students); 4. socio-emotional goals (A. development by graduate students of their personal and social values; B. development by graduate students of their non-rational sensitivity; C. development by graduate students of an appreciation for ideas. Each respondent is asked to rate how essential each value is for his department, and what the actual case is for his department. At

the end of the questionnaire the respondent is asked to volunteer for a follow-up interview dealing with career development, their discipline and department. (For details, see author's dissertation.)

Findings and Interpretation

Results from the questionnaire were analyzed first by taking the mean ratings for that considered "essential," and for the "actual" ratings within each department separately, and for each means or goal of education taken separately. The resulting scores were combined in numerous ways to compare, for example, the predominance of task-oriented over socio-emotionally oriented means or goals. The choice of specific means or goals can be rank ordered within and between departments. The essential ratings were compared to the actual ratings within and between departments to obtain satisfaction scores. (And student ratings were compared to faculty ratings for all of these possibilities. But since faculty and students were in close basic agreement, and since student response was greater, only student ratings will be reported here.) The tabulations were essentially variations on chart I, above. However, since the sample was incomplete, the data will be treated as suggestive rather than definitive. Even so, much effort was expended to assure that the data were sound and representative of the departments studied (cf. author's dissertation). Tables 1 and 2 are presented in the first place as examples of possible forms of analysis. The data are nonetheless real, and call for interpretation. But in order to conserve space, and due to incompleteness in the data, the interpretation will be selective and direct, as in reporting case study material.

Table 1

MEANS of Education Rank Ordered
Across Six Means by Students
Within Four Departments *

		Phil.		Anthro.		Physiol.		M. E.	
		Ess.	Act.	Ess.	Act.	Ess.	Act.	Ess.	Act.
Task Means	Accessibility	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	1
	Critiques	1	1	1	6	2	6	4	6
	Coordination	5	6	6	5	5	4	5	5
Socio. Means	Rapport	3	4	3	4	1	2	2	4
	Subjectivity	4	2	4	2	4	3	3	3
	Democratic	6	5	5	3	6	5	6	2
	n =	23	25	38	43	24	25	29	33

*Rank Orderings are read down each column with "1" being high, and "6" low "Essential" and "actual" rankings are given adjacent columns for each department. Totals for essential vs. actual ratings within departments do not match because some respondents failed to answer certain questions only.

Task vs. Socio-emotional Values

The overall findings, interpreting across tables 1 and 2 concerning the eight categories (of essential task means, essential task goals, essential socio-emotional means, essential socio-emotional goals, actual task means, actual task goals, actual socio-emotional means, and actual socio-emotional goals) suggest the following, with supplementary and impressionistic interpretations based on the interviews (reported in the author's dissertation), and in many cases on direct questions to the respondents about the meaning of their questionnaire responses. All four departments considered the essential means and goals and the actual goals attained to be primarily task oriented, indicating the drive toward objectivity in the university today, even in the more humanistic disciplines. However, the means used vary with the discipline. The philosophers felt the greatest need for (objectivity or) task orientation, possibly due to the typically less structured nature of the material they work with, and the ideology of rationality which pervades their task. Physiologists felt that the actual means used were socio-emotional, indicating the faculty's efforts to establish rapport with the students. Their behavior and rating is likely a "backlash" against the potentially distant and impersonal nature of their classroom and laboratory work. The anthropologists by ranking socio-emotional means as those actually used in practice were recognizing the unstructured nature of their discipline and its human content, while at the same time recognizing that they should somehow be striving for their goals with more objective, i.e., task oriented means. The mechanical engineers, by ranking socio-emotional means higher, in practice, are

Table 2

GOALS of Education Rank Ordered

Across Six Goals by Students

Within Four Departments*

		Phil.		Anthro.		Physiol.		M.E.	
		Ess.	Act.	Ess.	Act.	Ess.	Act.	Ess.	Act.
Task Goals	Mastery	1	1	2	3	1	3	2	2
	Creativity	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	3
	Career	6	4	6	1	4	1	5	1
Socio. Goals	Values	4	6	5	5	5	5	4	5
	Non-Rational	5	5	4	6	6	6	6	6
	Ideas	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	4
	n =	25	25	39	43	24	24	31	32

* This table is read exactly as the previous one, Table 1, above.

Ess. = essential rating.
Act. = actual rating.

indicating, as some students suggested, that they would like to be pushed, even in an authoritarian way, to getting their degree sooner. In effect, the students feel that the faculty is too democratic, too socio-emotionally oriented in their dealings with graduate students.

Means of Education

In table 1, the ranks of the mean rankings across the six educational means, within each department suggest the following. Its potential practical significance to educators and administrators should be obvious. There is a very large discrepancy of scores indicating a strong need for frequent and regular critiques of the graduate students' work, especially in their day-to-day and week-to-week thinking and research. This seems to call for a "collegial" relationship, which among other things allows the student to test out his ideas and make mistakes without fear of reprisal, but with the confident hope that his ideas and skills will be appreciated and nurtured wherever they may be found valuable. This requires breadth of knowledge on the part of the teacher, along with the ability to guide the student by eliciting the best in him, essentially playing down his weaknesses, except in order to improve critical deficiencies.

Critiques are especially desired in anthropology, no doubt because of the diffuseness and vagueness of evidence and research design and methods employed in interpreting their field work. The harder evidence of physiology and mechanical engineering make the necessity of frequent critiques somewhat less urgent, but still very useful and

desirable. Needless to say, critiques are seen as absolutely essential in philosophy, and in fact, are a major method used in carrying on the work of philosophical interchange.

The overall stress on the need for task oriented means, especially since they apparently are perceived as receiving less actual stress in practice than would be desirable, points up the essentially task oriented nature of the university. While socioemotional elements are considered relevant and important, they are more likely to be put in second place, even taken for granted in the disciplines examined. Apparently the fabled alienation and impersonality is less of a problem in these graduate departments at this university than the protesters and reformers would have us believe, at least as indicated by the present analysis. Or conversely, at very least, the indications are that there is a higher valuation, and hence greater potential and actual dissatisfaction on certain task oriented items than on the socioemotional. Finally, if the data are representative, the more quantitative the discipline (represented in ascending order by anthropology, philosophy, physiology, and M.E.), the more it is possible for task achievement to be taken for granted, and the more socioemotional the means which are considered essential. The exceptional item here is democratic interaction which was seen by the engineers as undesirable, likely due to the high degree of specialization and pragmatic nature of their work, as well as the fact that their primary avowed aim in graduate school is to get their degree as quickly as possible (assuming a concomitant accumulation of knowledge and skills), in order to gain more responsibility or a management position in the job market. Their job seems to require more external push from authorities, perhaps

because it has less totally absorbing subject matter than do the more directly socially relevant subjects. But while a democratic relationship is not highly valued, rapport is valued, suggesting images of the benevolent despot or the charismatic leader, or more generally the warm but controlling teacher as the most desirable for mechanical engineering students.

Goals of Education

Rankings across the six eduational goals (in table 2) suggest the following. Again, as might well be expected in the essentially preparatory nature of the university setting, task oriented goals are most essential and most achieved. Career advancement has its place, though minimally so for anthropologists. In any case, career advancement for students in the departments studied can well be, and usually is presumed to be the natural result of attaining a higher degree, reflecting to a large extent the state of the academic marketplace.

Task oriented goals are considered somewhat less essential in philosophy than in the other disciplines, seemingly reflecting the highly intellectual and idea-centered nature of the field. Even anthropologists consider task oriented goals more essential, though in practice they are apparently emphasized more than is considered essential in all departments, to the exclusion of say development of nonrational sensitivities, empathy, insight, and the like.

In general, socioemotional goals are deemphasized, both in theory and practice, particularly nonrational sensitivity, as well as

development of personal and social values, though both of the latter variables are considered comparatively essential by philosophers. Finally, there is rather high agreement on the goals of university education, both within and even across graduate departments, which does not seem to be the case for educational means.

Significance

The general significance of these kind of data for practical application in locating problematic issues should be apparent. For example, the data suggest the presence of the universal desire across all the departments for more frequent critiques of student work by faculty, as well as various other points or items of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, covering a broad range of educational means and goals. The structured nature of the questionnaire, and its general applicability across all types of graduate departments facilitates direct comparison among the departments, which is certainly a useful type of data, especially for university administrators. Large discrepancies between faculty and students, as well as between essential and actual ratings could lead to further investigation and ultimate recommendations appropriate to the departments. In particular, the data suggest that task oriented items are given more emphasis, both in theory (essentiality) and practice ("actual" rating).

In general, the theoretical sociological significance of these means-goals data are that they at least implicitly reconfirm the interactionist principle that we cannot directly predict behavior, or "actual"

relationship styles even on the basis of attitudes, values, or ideologies (i.e., what the individuals in question consider "essential"). We must go beyond a study of mere ideology to a study of the actors' individual or collective definition of their situation. This is more true of means to attaining goals, than of goals themselves. Goals are generally perceived to be attained in the degree to which they are considered essential, thus at least tentatively confirming subhypothesis 2: If the members of a department consider either task or socioemotional goals of education more essential, then they will find that the actual goals attained in their department are either task or socioemotionally oriented, respectively. In this case the essential and actual goals were predominantly task oriented in every department.

The greater variability in task vs. socioemotionality and the larger number of discrepancies between essential and actual ratings for means of education shows that more consideration of intervening variables is necessary, especially that of considering the actors' own definitions of their situation. This tends to cast doubt on subhypothesis 1: If the members of a department consider either task or socioemotional means of education more essential, then they will find that the actual means used in their department as either task or socioemotionally oriented, respectively.

Future Research

Furthermore, although comparison across departments is facilitated by the structuring of items in the questionnaire, to obtain a more

true-to-life picture of a department, let alone a discipline, a larger and more representative sample should be procured, and the questionnaire should again be complemented by interviews. Interviewing was done as part of this study, but space forbids further details. In particular, it appears that the very concept of ideology as used here can only be incompletely measured without the use of both questionnaire and interview data. Thus, it appears that the central hypothesis is not fully testable with data from this portion of the research alone, and it is left in doubt whether or not: The disciplines with the reputedly more objective ideologies (represented in descending order by mechanical engineering, physiology, anthropology, and philosophy) will foster a type of graduate student-faculty relationship that is higher in task orientation, but lower in socioemotionality.

More generally, however, it must be noted that the theoretical and policy utility of data gathered using the typology and indices suggested here will have to wait on further data gathering. But the potential use of the typology and data is manifold. Concerning the educational process in general, it would be valuable to find out which means (essential and actual) correspond with or best achieve which educational goals (both essential and actual). From this it would be possible to compare teaching and learning styles of whole colleges or divisions in universities. Following this, and given sufficient longitudinal data, it would be only a step to the delineation of models of styles of career development through the learning relationship. Further theoretical work would fit these ideas into an explanatory theory of "career development in educational context" (cf. the author's forthcoming paper).

Still on a general level, the means-goals model, supplemented with case study material, could be used to illustrate how social processes such as labeling and the definition of the situation must be taken into account in order to predict specific behaviors from ideologies (i.e., to predict actual values in practice from those values considered essential by the members of a group). Remaining on a general level, but concerning relations between and among disciplines in universities, data from this model could give some empirical basis for making the more encompassing administrative recommendations. Comparison could also be made of the implicit aspects of the socialization processes taking place across departments, across disciplines, and eventually across learning relationships wherever they may be in operation.

Within departments, at both the graduate and undergraduate level, data based on the means-goals typology could be used to achieve a better match and/or adaptation between teacher interaction style and student interaction style. And with this in mind, students could be admitted and faculty more intelligently hired to improve this matching or balance of styles and goals between teachers and learners even at varying stages of their career development as individuals. Continuing research along these lines would be required to institutionalize a flexible curriculum. This could hopefully be achieved by periodic qualitative, not merely quantitative, diagnoses of students' and instructors' strengths, weaknesses, dissatisfactions and desired changes.

Overall, the future significance of this study could well be its pointing the way to educational relevance over alienation and unrest on

campus. The basic assumption here was that the key to understanding an educational system is through its underlying philosophy and the organization in practice of the educational process. The further assumption was made that educational values (means and goals) are largely social values, and too often merely implicit, but inevitably and inextricably interwined in the type of relationship maintained between and among faculty members and students in their day-to-day interaction, both in and outside the classroom. Hence, the typology developed here of educational means and goals was couched largely in terms of conscious social interactional values operating in the faculty-student relationship.

Thus, in order to help overcome the fabled alienation and unrest on campuses, our long range purpose must be to make these educational means and goals, i.e., these social values in the education process, more relevant and responsive to the needs of students in the context of their society. Yet caution should be taken that the insistent pursuit of relevance will not be allowed to interfere with the leisure necessary to the work of deeper scholarship and to the advancement of solid knowledge as an end in itself. The way proposed here to increase relevance is continuing research to find out how these educational values show themselves in practice, as well as which values are considered by teachers and students to be essential, though not adequately attained. This is the essence of policy research on the most basic level. The succeeding task is for policy and decision-making bodies to find ways to overcome the discrepancies between theory and practice, and

differences between faculty and students and administrators at this all-important level of basic social and educational values. The allied task of the present research will be to establish itself on a base much broader than a simple survey, namely, to cast itself in a mold composed of a wide range of contextually relevant variables which will help explain discrepancies inevitably to be discovered between means and goals considered essential and those actually attained. This involves a continuing study of the process of career development in the organizational context of the diversity of college and university departments.

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